

1 **What is claimed is:**

2 1. A method of providing a context sensitive mapping of a plurality of help informational items
3 in an information retrieval system, comprising:

4 providing a database having one or more record entries, said one or more record entries
5 defining relationships between originating locations from which help requests are originated and
6 corresponding ones of said plurality of help informational items, and said one or more record entries
7 each including an associated relationship strength value based on historical frequency of selection of
8 respective said corresponding ones of said plurality of help informational items during a help information
9 retrieval session initiated from said originating locations;

10 upon detection of a user initiation of a help information retrieval session from an originating
11 location, determining whether one or more matching record entries exist in said database for said
12 originating location; and

13 providing, if said one or more matching record entries exist, an access to one or more
14 associated help informational items corresponding to said originating location according to said one or
15 more record entries.
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17 2. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 1, further
18 comprising:

19 detecting at least one of said one or more associated help informational items being selected;
20 and

21 increasing said associated relationship strength value for said one or more matching record
22 entries corresponding to said at least one of said one or more associated help informational items by
23 a predetermined amount.
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1 3. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 1, further
2 comprising:

3 if said one or more record entries are not found in said database, providing a help topic content
4 listing at least one of said plurality of help informational items; and
5 upon user selection of a help informational item from said listed at least one of said plurality of
6 help informational items, creating a new record entry having a relationship strength value for said
7 originating location and said user selected help informational item pair.

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9 4. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 3, further
10 comprising:

11 assigning an initial value of said relationship strength value.

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13 5. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 2, further
14 comprising:

15 updating said database to reflect said associated relationship strength value being increased.

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17 6. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 3, further
18 comprising:

19 updating said database to store said new record entry.

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21 7. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 5, further
22 comprising:

23 collecting user selection data comprising a log of user actions during one or more help
24 information retrieval sessions; and

25 wherein said updating said database is performed periodically off-line using said collected user
26 selection data.

1 8. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 6, further
 2 comprising:
 3 collecting user selection data comprising a log of user actions during one or more help
 4 information retrieval sessions; and
 5 wherein said updating said database is performed periodically off-line using said collected user
 6 selection data.

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 8 9. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 1, further
 9 comprising:
 10 displaying a list of said one or more associated help informational items to said user.

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 12 10. The method of providing a context sensitive mapping in accordance with claim 9, further
 13 comprising:
 14 sorting said list of said one or more associated help informational items in a descending order
 15 of respective associated relationship strength.

1 11. An apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping of a plurality of help informational
2 items in an information retrieval system, comprising:

3 a database having one or more record entries, said one or more record entries defining
4 relationships between originating locations from which help requests are originated and corresponding
5 ones of said plurality of help informational items, and said one or more record entries each including an
6 associated relationship strength value based on historical frequency of selection of respective said
7 corresponding ones of said plurality of help informational items during a help information retrieval
8 session initiated from said originating locations; and

9 a navigation interface adapted to, upon detection of a user initiation of a help information
10 retrieval session from an originating location, determine whether one or more matching record entries
11 exist in said database for said being viewed informational item, and to provide, if said one or more
12 matching record entries exist, an access to one or more associated help informational items
13 corresponding to said originating location according to said one or more record entries.

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15 12. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 11, wherein:

16 said navigation interface is adapted to, upon detecting at least one of said one or more
17 associated help informational items being selected, increase said associated relationship strength value
18 for said one or more matching record entries corresponding to said at least one of said one or more
19 associated help informational items by a predetermined amount.

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21 13. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 11, wherein:

22 said navigation interface is configured to, if said one or more record entries are not found in said
23 database, provide a help topic content listing at least one of said plurality of help informational items,
24 and, upon user selection of a help informational item from said listed at least one of said plurality of help
25 informational items, to create a new record entry having a relationship strength value for said originating
26 location and said user selected help informational item pair.

1 14. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 13, wherein:
2 said navigation interface is configured to assign an initial value of said relationship strength value.
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4 15. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 12, further
5 comprising:
6 a database update mechanism for updating said database to reflect said associated relationship
7 strength value being increased.
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9 16. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 3, further
10 comprising:
11 a database update mechanism configured to store said new record entry in said database.
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13 17. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 15, further
14 comprising:
15 means for collecting user selection data comprising a log of user actions during one or more help
16 information retrieval sessions; and
17 wherein said updating said database is performed periodically off-line using said collected user
18 selection data.
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20 18. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 16, further
21 comprising:
22 means for collecting user selection data comprising a log of user actions during one or more help
23 information retrieval sessions; and
24 wherein said updating said database is performed periodically off-line using said collected user
25 selection data.
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1 19. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 11, wherein:
2 said navigation interface is configured to cause a list of said one or more associated help
3 informational items to be displayed to said user.
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5 20. The apparatus for providing a context sensitive mapping according to claim 19, wherein:
6 said navigation interface is configured to sort said list of said one or more associated help
7 informational items in a descending order of respective associated relationship strength.
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9 21. An information retrieval system, comprising:
10 a plurality of help informational items; and
11 a database having one or more record entries, said one or more record entries defining
12 relationships between locations from which help requests originated and corresponding ones of said
13 plurality of help informational items, and said one or more record entries each including an associated
14 relationship strength value based on historical frequency of selection of respective said corresponding
15 ones of said plurality of help informational items during a help information retrieval session initiated from
16 said originating locations.
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18 22. The information retrieval system according to claim 21, further comprising;
19 a navigation interface adapted to, upon detection of a user initiation of a help information
20 retrieval session from an originating location, determine whether one or more matching record entries
21 exist in said database for said originating location, and to provide, if said one or more matching record
22 entries exist, an access to one or more associated help informational items corresponding to said
23 originating location according to said one or more record entries.
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25 23. The information retrieval system according to claim 21, wherein:
26 said plurality of informational items comprise a plurality of world wide web pages.
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1 24. A computer readable storage medium having stored thereon computer program for
2 implementing a method of providing a context sensitive mapping of a plurality of help informational items
3 in an information retrieval system, said computer program comprising a set of instructions for:
4 providing a database having one or more record entries, said one or more record entries
5 defining relationships between originating locations from which help requests are originated and
6 corresponding ones of said plurality of help informational items, and said one or more record entries
7 each including an associated relationship strength value based on historical frequency of selection of
8 respective said corresponding ones of said plurality of help informational items during a help information
9 retrieval session initiated from said originating locations;

10 upon detection of a user initiation of a help information retrieval session from an originating
11 location, determining whether one or more matching record entries exist in said database for said
12 originating location; and

13 providing, if said one or more matching record entries exist, an access to one or more
14 associated help informational items corresponding to said originating location according to said one or
15 more record entries.

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17 25. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 24, wherein said computer
18 program further comprising one or more instructions for:

19 detecting at least one of said one or more associated help informational items being selected;
20 and

21 increasing said associated relationship strength value for said one or more matching record
22 entries corresponding to said at least one of said one or more associated help informational items by
23 a predetermined amount.

1 26. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 24, wherein said computer
2 program further comprising one or more instructions for:

3 if said one or more record entries are not found in said database, providing a help topic content
4 listing at least one of said plurality of help informational items; and
5 upon user selection of a help informational item from said listed at least one of said plurality of
6 help informational items, creating a new record entry having a relationship strength value for said
7 originating location and said user selected help informational item pair.

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9 27. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 26, wherein said computer
10 program further comprising one or more instructions for:

11 assigning an initial value of said relationship strength value.

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13 28. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 25, wherein said computer
14 program further comprising one or more instructions for:

15 updating said database to reflect said associated relationship strength value being increased.

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17 29. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 26, wherein said computer
18 program further comprising one or more instructions for:

19 updating said database to store said new record entry.

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21 30. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 28, wherein said computer
22 program further comprising one or more instructions for:

23 collecting user selection data comprising a log of user actions during one or more help
24 information retrieval sessions; and

25 wherein said updating said database is performed periodically off-line using said collected user
26 selection data.

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1 31. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 29, wherein said computer
2 program further comprising one or more instructions for:
3 collecting user selection data comprising a log of user actions during one or more help
4 information retrieval sessions; and
5 wherein said updating said database is performed periodically off-line using said collected user
6 selection data.

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8 32. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 24, wherein said computer
9 program further comprising one or more instructions for:
10 displaying a list of said one or more associated help informational items to said user.

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12 33. The computer readable storage medium according to claim 32, wherein said computer
13 program further comprising one or more instructions for:
14 sorting said list of said one or more associated help informational items in a descending order
15 of respective associated relationship strength.